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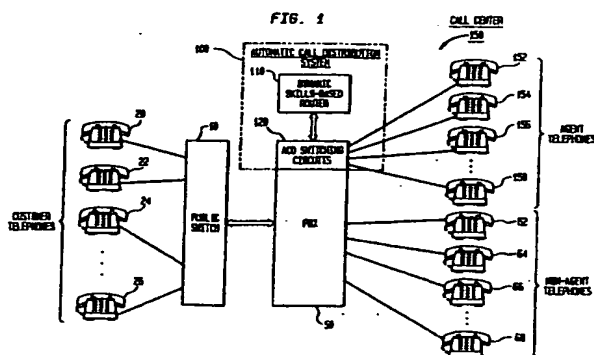
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(54) **Method and apparatus for skill-based routing in a call center**

(57) An automatic call distribution (ACD) system (100) has a transaction queue for storing data indicating the skills and the levels of these skills that are required to process the calls at a call center (150). The ACD system also has a skills inventory database (206) for storing data indicating the skills and the skill levels of each of the agents (152, 154, 156, 158) at the call center (150). The skills inventory database (206) also stores data indicating the preferences and the preference levels of the call center management to have specific agents process calls with specific skill requirement levels. The ACD sys-

tem compares the skill levels required by a call with the skill levels and/or preference levels of available agents and distributes the call to the available agent that has the best skill and/or preference match. A match is best with respect to skills if the agent is not underqualified to process the call and if the agent is the least overqualified agent. A match is best with respect to preferences if the call center management most prefers that the agent handle the call. The call center management controls whether the ACD system considers skill matches, preference matches, or both.





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 96 30 2887

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
P,X	HASSLER K W ET AL: "REVOLUTIONIZING DEFINITY CALL CENTERS IN THE 1990S" AT & T TECHNICAL JOURNAL, vol. 74, no. 4, 1 July 1995, pages 64-73, XP000517580 * the whole document *	1	
P,X	EP 0 701 358 A (ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL CORP) 13 March 1996 * abstract *	1	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 27 July 1998	Examiner Vandevenne, M
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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